

Indiana Region 9 Workforce Board, Inc.

Request for Qualifications

For

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Youth
Programs and Services**

Services to be Delivered

July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2011

RFQ Issue Date: May 8, 2009

Response Due Date: June 5, 2009

*Serving the following Indiana counties: Bartholomew,
Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings,
Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland.*

Indiana Region 9 Workforce Board, Inc.

500 Industrial Drive, Suite 144
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025
812-537-4949

Section I: Background and General RFP Information

A. Overview of RFQ

The Regional Workforce Board (RWB) and Regional Operator (RO) for Economic Growth Region 9 (EGR-9) are issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to procure service providers to deliver WIA Title I Youth services to eligible youth in Southeast Indiana. More specifically, the RWB is seeking proposals from organizations and agencies to use WIA Youth funds to provide youth development and preparation services to young individuals who meet federal income eligibility criteria.

In keeping with the intent of WIA, the RWB is committed to helping economically disadvantaged youth to achieve in school, access job training and higher education opportunities, and gain the knowledge and skills required to progress in well-paying careers. The RWB seeks partnerships with organizations that can demonstrate measurable, positive impact on youth. Youth-serving organizations are invited to respond to this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) as an important step toward building a network of integrated youth services, one that helps youth succeed in school, at work, and as members and leaders of their communities.

The RWB is seeking interested organizations that demonstrate the four critical characteristics listed below.

- Competent and cooperative management with a vision for developing and supporting true youth development activities;
- A commitment and ability to ensure that youth oriented staff are available to serve over 400 low income youth in the next 2 years;
- A high level of innovation and creativity in designing project and experiential based learning activities in which young individuals can participate; and,
- A willingness to work with community partners and educational organizations in the planning and implementation of these innovative approaches to youth development.

B. Purpose of RFQ

The purpose of this RFQ is to solicit proposals for the delivery of youth services under the Workforce Investment Act in the following counties: Bartholomew, Dearborn, Decatur, Franklin, Jackson, Jefferson, Jennings, Ohio, Ripley and Switzerland. Interested organizations can propose programs and services for youth in all ten counties or they can propose to target specific counties as appropriate. However, the RWB will actively work to ensure that WIA Youth services are available to eligible youth in every county. As such, interested organizations are encouraged to make proposed youth programs and services available in the all counties of EGR-9.

WIA rules require that programs must be designed to serve both low income in-school and out-of-school youth. In this solicitation, the RWB is only accepting proposals that target and serve one or more of the three following categories of youth.

1. Youth who are 16 years of age or older, are in-school, but are at-risk of not successfully finishing high school;

2. Youth who are 16 years of age or older and have dropped out-of-school (and have not yet earned a GED); and,
3. Youth who are out-of-school having successfully completed high school, desire to participate in further learning activities, but lack the financial resources or guidance necessary to make this happen.

WIA program requirements mandate that a minimum of 30% of all WIA Youth program expenditures must be spent on providing services to out-of-school youth (categories 2 and 3 above). Bidding organizations should keep this requirement in mind to ensure that the proposed program design plans for services to both in-school and out-of-school youth.

C. WIA Youth Program Description

The overall goal of the WIA Youth program is to connect eligible youth to skill development and other educational activities and then to the local labor market. To accomplish this, youth development strategies must be developed to help interested youth enroll in and successfully complete critical skill development activities AND successfully transition to employment in the local labor market. Youth who are deficient in basic skills must also participate in activities designed to improve their reading, writing, math, analytical, computer and communication skills.

From a broad perspective, the WIA youth program design must consist of four components: 1) an objective assessment of the skill levels and service needs of youth customers, 2) the development of an individual service strategy or plan for each youth customer, 3) the delivery of specific youth development and other workforce services to youth customers, and 4) all youth must receive some form of follow-up services for a minimum period of 12 months following their completion of all program activities. From a more detailed perspective, the WIA legislation mandates that ten specific program elements must be included in the WIA Youth program design (these can be available by direct service provision, through partnerships with other organizations, or by referral to other organizations as appropriate):

1. Tutoring and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention activities
2. Alternative secondary school offerings
3. Summer employment opportunities, directly linked to academic and occupational learning activities
4. Paid or unpaid work experiences, including internships
5. Occupational skill training
6. Leadership development opportunities
7. Supportive services
8. Comprehensive guidance and counseling

9. Adult Mentoring

10. Follow up services for a minimum of 12 months

Interested organizations should also note that the RWB views strong community partnerships as instrumental to the success and sustainability of “second chance” programs for at-risk and out-of-school youth. Responses should therefore demonstrate comprehensive collaboration - including shared financing as appropriate – among local school districts, community colleges, and community-based organizations.

D. Alignment of WIA Youth Program with High-Growth Industries

The RWB is committed to supporting efforts by the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership to align workforce development and economic development activities in the region. Over the past year, there have been significant efforts to identify target industries that will be the focus of these joint workforce/economic development activities. These regional efforts have identified a number of high-growth industries that are to be targeted: (1) Advanced Manufacturing, (2) Nursing, (3) Hospitality and Tourism, (4) Skill Trades, and (5) Embedded Systems. The RWB is seeking WIA Youth proposals from organizations that understand the relationship between workforce and economic development and that can assist in aligning WIA Youth programs and services with these targeted industries.

E. Transition of Current (Carry-In) WIA Youth Customers

The RWB is committed to a smooth continuation of services to existing youth customers without an undue interruption of services. Youth customers currently receiving services from an existing provider will continue to receive services from that provider if the provider is awarded a new contract through this RFQ. Youth customers currently receiving services from an existing provider that does not receive a contract extension or new contract under this RFQ will be smoothly transitioned to another provider. The RWB may require new contractors to accept “carry-in” WIA youth participants and to continue providing appropriate WIA services to these young individuals.

F. Performance Goals & Measures

The Workforce Investment Act measures the success of WIA Youth programs services based on a set of required performance measures. These performance measures have recently undergone a significant change and now include three (3) Department of Labor (DOL) defined measures for youth served in the program:

Placement in Employment or Education	66% of all youth
Attainment of Degree or Certificate	50% of all youth
Literacy and Numeracy Gains	75% of all youth

Please note that these performance measures are negotiated on an annual basis and are therefore subject to change based on these negotiations with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and DOL. For more specific information on these measures, interested organizations are encouraged to review Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 17-05 as issued by the US

Department of Labor on February 17, 2006. This Guidance Letter provides significant detail on how these performance measures are calculated.

G. Eligible Responders

Organizations eligible to submit proposals in response to this RFQ include not-for-profit organizations, education institutions, government entities, for-profit businesses and other organizations that are not suspended, debarred or otherwise prohibited from entering into a legal contract for WIA Youth funding. Proposals from community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, small businesses and minority-owned businesses are encouraged.

All bidders must accept liability for all aspects of any WIA program conducted under contract with the RWB. Bidders will be liable for any disallowed costs or illegal expenditures of funds or program operations conducted.

This Request for Qualifications is not in itself an offer of work nor does it commit the RWB to fund any proposals submitted. The RWB is not liable for any costs incurred in the preparation or research of proposals. The RWB reserves the right to make an award to any bidder or to make no awards, if that is deemed to serve the best interests of EGR-9. The RWB also reserves the right to: 1) amend or withdraw this RFQ at any time, 2) reject any and all proposals and 3) reissue this RFQ. All commitments made by the RWB are contingent upon the availability of funds.

H. Contract Length and Details

WIA Youth program requirements mandate that a minimum of 30% of all program expenditures must be spent on providing services to out-of-school youth. Responding organizations should know that the RWB intends to be as inclusive as possible in this solicitation. The goal is to receive a wide variety of high quality, innovative proposals that meet the youth development needs of the emerging workforce in EGR-9. The resulting contract with the successful bidder will be for a two-year period which can begin any time after contract negotiations are completed. Based on performance, the RWB may elect to renew the contract for up to one additional year.

I. RFQ Provisions and Expectations

The RWB assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. The RWB also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements that the RWB makes to carry out the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity. This WIA Title I funded program is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services will be made available upon request for individuals with disabilities. By submitting a bid all bidders are providing an assurance that they will comply with the above nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

The successful bidder also assures that if awarded a contract by the RWB, it will comply with Regional, State and Federal program and financial monitoring requirements. This means the

bidder will make available required information (both program and financial) as is required to satisfy local, state, and federal monitoring expectations. In addition, bidders are required to maintain all WIA records for three years.

Responding organizations should note that specifications in this RFQ may change based on issuance of State or Federal policy or WIA re-authorization. The RWB will work with successful bidders to implement any changes required by the State or the federal Department of Labor. By submitting a response, the bidder agrees to work cooperatively with the RWB to comply with any required subsequent changes.

J. Response Submission and Time Line

To ensure a fair and open process for all interested bidders, the following time table will be followed as closely as possible with this RFQ:

RFQ Issued	May 8, 2009
Letter of Intent to Respond due to RO	May 15, 2009
Questions & Answers Deadline	May 22, 2009
Responses Due	June 5, 2009, Noon
Proposal Review Completed	June 9, 2009
Regional Workforce Board Approval	June 12, 2009
Contract Negotiations Completed	June 30, 2009
Contractor Begins Delivering Services	July 1, 2009 or after

The RWB may require selected responders to attend oral interviews, participate in negotiations and rewrite their statements of work as agreed upon during the negotiations.

K. Intent to Respond

It is mandatory that a Letter of Intent to Respond be received by the Board Contact at the address listed below on or before May 15, 2009 by 4:00 PM. Said letter does not commit bidder to submit a response. The Letter of Intent should contain the company name, address, contact person, and contact information. The Letter of Intent can also be e-mailed to the Board Contact. All of the Letters of Intent to Respond will be kept confidential and will be released upon written request and only after a selection has been made.

Indiana Region 9 Workforce Board, Inc.
c/o Bart Brown, Regional Operator
500 Industrial Drive, Suite 144
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

bbrown@indianaregion9.org

Section II: Proposal Requirements for Youth Proposals

- A. Responses must be received by noon EST, June 5, 2009 in person or by mail at the address indicated. Proposals received after that time and date may be rejected. Please note that proposals must be received, not postmarked, by noon, April 20, 2009. Responses will not be accepted by email or fax.
- B. Responses must include:
- One copy of the proposal clearly labeled "ORIGINAL."
 - Five copies of the proposal clearly labeled "COPY."
 - Attachments completed with requested information and executed properly.
 - An electronic copy of the proposal must also be submitted via email and sent to the attention of Mark Bryson, at mbryson@indianaregion9.org.

All pages must be numbered.

Proposal is limited to 15 single-sided pages, not including other sections of your proposal such as required attachments, your audit/financial reports, and other attachments such as resumes and organizational charts.

Responses that fail to follow instructions and do not include all applicable information and forms may not be considered.

- C. **Attachment A** (Non-Collusion Affidavit) must be signed and submitted.
- D. **Attachment B** (Assurances and Certifications) must be signed and submitted.
- E. Responses must be sent with a "Return Receipt Requested." Faxed or electronically transmitted proposals will not be accepted. The transmitting envelope will be clearly marked "Response to RFQ" and addressed to:

Bart Brown, Regional Operator
REACH, Inc.
500 Industrial Blvd., Suite 144
Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

- H. Questions regarding this RFQ may be submitted in writing to Mark Bryson, VP of Programs, REACH, Inc. via email to mbryson@indianaregion9.org or fax at 812-537-4949. Questions will be addressed until May 22, 2009 and all answers will be posted at www.indianaregion9.org.
- I. Use this as a checklist to ensure that you have included all items required to respond to this

RFQ. Failure to include all required information could result in rejection of your proposal.

- Cover Letter with original signatures
 - Proposal Statement of Work
 - Organizational Chart
 - Attachment A (Non-Collusion Affidavit)
 - Attachment B (Assurances and Certifications)
 - Copy of most recent audit report
- J. Bidders have the right to appeal any action or decision related to this RFQ. Appeals will be reviewed and investigated by the RWB. The decision of the RWB in such situations shall be final. Bidders wishing to make a formal appeal should do so in writing to Bart Brown, President/CEO via email to bbrown@indianaregion9.org or fax at 812-537-4951.
- K. The RWB reserves the right to: (1) amend or withdraw this RFQ at any time, (2) reject any and all responses, and (3) re-issue this RFQ if Necessary.

Section III: Proposal Statement of Work

Interested organizations should adhere to the following outline in responding to this RFQ. This will make your proposal more reviewable and will allow reviewers of your proposal to make more informed decisions.

A. Experience of Bidding Organization and Staff (25% of overall rating)

1. Provide an overall description of your organization. What is your organization's mission and vision, governance structure, and legal status? Please describe your management structure that highlights key management personnel and their proposed roles with this project. Please identify the single point of contact for your organization. What experience does your single point of contact have at directing and managing youth projects? **(10% of overall rating)**
2. Responses must include information to demonstrate that the organization and/or its key staff has a record of success in operating youth development and workforce preparation programs or projects. Describe your organizational and key staff experience in providing these services to youth. Outline any specific workforce services that your organization and/or key staff have provided to low income youth that are either at-risk of not graduating high school or are out-of-school but looking for further opportunities or guidance. **(9% of overall rating)**
3. Provide three references of individuals outside your organization familiar with the quality of prior youth development and workforce preparation programs your organization and/or key staff is capable of providing. Letters of support are not required

and will not be considered in the overall evaluation of bidding organizations. **(3% of overall rating)**

4. Describe your organization's experience in working with DWD's TrackOne client tracking system and/or other MIS systems. Specifically, detail any experience your organization and key staff possess in the real time reporting of customer activities in TrackOne. **(3% of overall rating)**

B. Proposed Plan of Work (40% of overall rating)

1. In section I.B. of this RFQ, the RWB has identified three specific groups of youth to be targeted for WIA Youth assistance. Of these three groups, detail which of these specific youth your organization will target for services. Also, identify the specific number of youth (for each of the three targeted groups your organization is proposing to serve) that will receive WIA Youth services through your organization. **(2% of overall rating)**
2. The RWB is looking for highly innovative and nontraditional recruitment strategies that aggressively and effectively outreach to at-risk youth. Describe the specific strategies that your organization will utilize to make youth aware of available WIA Youth services and to recruit them for participation in youth development and workforce preparation activities. **(7% of overall rating)**
3. Describe the eligibility, assessment, individual service strategy development, and case management services that will be provided to youth. Indicate how youth will be assessed and prepared for youth development and workforce preparation activities. Describe any innovative or unique approaches to youth assessment or youth service planning that your organization will utilize. **(7% of overall rating)**
4. Describe all WIA Youth services that will be provided by your organization. Please provide specific details on how each of the ten required WIA Youth services will be delivered to youth that need these services (the ten required services are identified in section I.C. of this RFQ). The RWB is especially interested in the youth development services that your organization will make available to WIA Youth customers. Please provide information on all youth programs, projects and learning/development activities to be provided by your organization. **(7% of overall rating)**
5. Please detail any specific strategies for developing and implementing a summer employment program for young individuals in 2010. Detail the kinds of summer work and activities in which youth will be engaged and identify the process that will be used to payroll these youth and issue checks/payments to them. **(7% of overall rating)**
6. Detail how your proposed WIA Youth services align with the regional labor market. Provide specific details on how your proposed WIA Youth services align with the skill requirements of the high growth industries in EGR-9. **(5% of overall rating)**

7. Describe how your organization will manage WIA Youth services and activities to meet or exceed each of the performance measures that are in place for the WIA Youth program. Provide specific information on the strategies your organization will use to ensure that youth are continuously engaged in WIA Youth services until they have successfully transitioned to employment or more advanced training. In addition, please provide an assurance that services will also be designed to meet any additional quality standards that may be established by the RWB. **(5% of overall rating)**

C. Staffing Plan and Organizational Structure (15% of overall rating)

Staffing of the WIA youth program is one of the most critical aspects of ensuring program quality. Please describe your proposed staffing plans.

1. While staffing/hiring decisions will be the responsibility of your organization, please identify the qualifications of any current staff that will be involved in delivering the proposed WIA Youth services. Include brief position descriptions with position titles. Your staffing plan should also specify staffing levels and locations where these staff will be located. Include an organizational chart that illustrates the structure of the staff to be used in support of the proposed programs. **(5% of overall rating)**
2. If the staff is to be hired at a later date, include the minimum qualifications required for selection of staff. Also, please describe the process through which qualified staff will be identified and selected. **(5% of overall rating)**
3. Identify key management staff by name with a summary of their credentials and a brief resume of their qualifications. **(5% of overall rating)**

D. Partnerships and Coordination (5% of overall rating)

Include a brief description of any partners that will be involved in the operation of your proposed WIA youth program. Describe the specific role that these partners will play in delivering the proposed workforce services to youth. For partners that will play a significant role in your proposed Youth program, you are encouraged to include letters from these partners which reference the specific commitments being made, including services to be delivered to youth customers, financial or in-kind contributions if any, and any other commitment(s) being made. **(5% of overall rating)**

E. Financial Management (15% of overall rating)

1. Bidders must maintain a financial management system that is auditable and in compliance with generally accepted accounting principles. Financial records must be available for audit and monitoring purposes. Bidders should provide a brief description of the accountability of the organization in this section and provide one copy of their most recent audit report with the bid package. **(7% of overall rating)**

2. Has your organization had any questioned costs, disallowed costs or compliance monitoring findings in the last three years? If so, describe how the issues have been resolved. **(5% of overall rating)**
3. If WIA costs you incurred in the operation of the proposed youth program were subsequently disallowed as a result of an audit or monitoring (meaning you spent them inappropriately), does your organization have the capability to repay these funds? If yes, from what source? **(3% of overall rating)**

Non-Collusion Affidavit

State of Indiana

County of _____

The respondent is hereby giving oath that it has not, in any way, directly or indirectly, entered into any arrangement or agreement with any other respondent or with any officer or employee of the Economic Growth EGR-9 Regional Workforce board & Regional Operator whereby it has paid or will pay to such other respondent or officer or employee any sum of money or anything of real value whatever; and has not, directly or indirectly, entered into any arrangement or agreement with any other respondent or respondents which tends to or does lessen or destroy free competition in the letting of the agreement sought for by the attached response; that no inducement of any form or character other than that which appears on the face of the response will be suggested, offered, paid, or delivered to any person whomsoever to influence the acceptance of the said response or awarding of the agreement, nor has this respondent any agreement or understanding of any kind whatsoever, with any person whomsoever, to pay, deliver to, or share with any other person in any way or manner any of the proceeds of the agreement sought by this response.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Print or Type Name

Date

Attachment B

Assurances and Certifications

The respondent assures and certifies to each of the following items:

1. The bidding organization agrees to comply with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations governing the Workforce Investment Act, Workforce Investment Board, Regional Workforce Board & Regional Operator and any other applicable laws and regulations.
2. The bidding organization has not been debarred or suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federally funded programs.
3. The bidding organization possesses legal authority to offer the attached proposal.
4. A drug free workplace will be maintained in accordance with State of Indiana requirements.
5. By submitting a proposal the bidder certifies to his/her knowledge and belief that there is no conflict of interest (real or apparent) inherent in the bid or in delivering the plan of work if the RWB awards a contract. A conflict of interest would arise if any individual involved in the preparation of this RFQ, proposal review and rating or award decisions has a financial or other interest in or represents the bidding organization and would be likely to gain financially or personally from the award of a contract. The same would hold true for any member of the individual's family, partner, or an organization employing or about to employ any of the above as a direct result of the successful award of a contract under the RFQ. The RWB reserves the right to disqualify a bid should a conflict of interest be discovered during the solicitation process.
6. The bidding organization assures that if awarded a contract by the RWB, it will comply with Regional, State and Federal program and financial monitoring requirements. This means the bidder will make available required information (both program and financial) as is required to satisfy local, state, and federal monitoring expectations.
7. The bidding organization assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws: Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended. The RWB also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR Part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements that the RWB makes to carry out the WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity. This WIA Title I funded program is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services will be made available upon request for individuals with disabilities. By submitting a bid all bidders are providing an assurance that they will comply with the above nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

Signature of Authorized Representative

Print or Type Name

Date